



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

February 25, 2003

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To: People Interested in the Grand Coulee-Bell 500-kV Transmission Line Project

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has decided to construct the Grand Coulee-Bell 500-kV transmission line project, an 84-mile line connecting Spokane with Grand Coulee, Washington. The proposed action was analyzed in the draft and final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) prepared for the project. The decision, signed by BPA Administrator Steve Wright, approves the first transmission line construction project under the agency's infrastructure program to upgrade aging and overloaded lines in the region. This project will improve reliability and ensure that BPA can continue to meet its statutory and contractual obligations to deliver power to where it is needed in Washington state and the Pacific Northwest.

BPA has enclosed the Record of Decision on the Grand Coulee-Bell 500-kV Transmission Line Project in eastern Washington. This letter briefly describes that decision, the construction schedule, and tells where to call if you have questions.

The project involves removing an existing 115-kV wood pole transmission line and replacing it with a 500-kV lattice steel line on existing right-of-way for most of its length. The line will be constructed using a single-circuit design, with the exception of two short distances of slightly less than one mile where double-circuit towers will be used because the right-of-way is constrained. BPA's Bell Substation will be expanded; the Bureau of Reclamation's 500-kV Grand Coulee Switchyard will be expanded only slightly, and equipment will be installed at two other BPA facilities outside the area.

Minor modifications to the existing 115-kV system have already begun, with construction of the new 500-kV line to begin in April. Final energization is scheduled for November 2004. We have already contacted and will continue to work with some landowners on purchasing new easements. When construction begins in April, we will notify landowners along the corridor about the construction work schedule, and work one-on-one with landowners to minimize impacts during construction. We will provide the names and phone numbers of key BPA and construction contractor staff so landowners can contact us should questions arise during construction.

If you have questions about this project or would like a copy of the draft EIS, final EIS, or more copies of the Record of Decision, you may call our toll-free line at 1-888-276-7790, or write to BPA's Public Information Center, P.O. Box 12999, Portland, Oregon, 97212. You

may also get project information and access documents on our website at www.transmission.bpa.gov/projects.

Thank you for your time and efforts during the early planning, design, environmental, and decision-making phases of this project.

Sincerely,

Mark Korsness
Project Manager

Enclosure: Record of Decision